

The cases of Stefan Kiszko and Stephen Lawrence ...

Institutional incompetence

Is the British left making 'race' too interesting? At the official inquiry this month into the racist murder five years ago of Stephen Lawrence, Lee Jasper (secretary of the National Assembly Against Racism) said: "Anti-racists and black communities are deeply disappointed by the evidence presented by Sir Paul Condon". Sir Paul, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, had just refused to admit that 'institutional racism' existed in the police force.

Considered against the case of Stefan Kiszko, which was portrayed in a docu-drama two weeks ago, anarchists may conclude that institutional idiocy is even more widespread than racism in the British police. Kiszko was not coloured or black, he was the son of Slovenian immigrants. Stefan was shy, odd-looking, fat and socially awkward. Living in Rochdale after the war the family had a Germanic accent, and Stefan was bullied throughout his life.

When the body of 11-year-old Lesley Molseed turned up on the Pennine moors in October 1975, Stefan Kiszko, then 23 years old, seemed to fit the bill of sex fiend and child killer, having previously been accused of indecent exposure. The film then shows what most of us know already: once the police have a credible suspect the machine of British justice swings into action mercilessly and almost unthinkingly.

A confession was extracted and signed by Stefan. Though this was retracted almost straight away, it was crucial evidence at the trial. Seemingly it is all part of the prosecution ritual of a statement signed by a frightened and confused suspect. The same with the forensic evidence of the comparison of

the sperm stains on Lesley Molseed's clothes with that of Stefan's, which was either lost, mislaid or deliberately withheld.

When the defence team enter, the farce continues with David Waddington QC, later to become Home Secretary under Margaret Thatcher, trying to persuade Stefan to plead guilty on the ground of diminished responsibility. The result being that Stefan was sentenced to life imprisonment, much of it spent in solitary confinement on Rule 43. Beatings follow from his fellow inmates as a 'beast' and 'low form of life', and the consequent slow decline of his mental health.

It represents a very familiar sequence of events, except in Stefan's case he served sixteen years before the error was recognised. He couldn't have killed Lesley Molseed because he was sterile and the semen stains on her clothes couldn't be his.

No one has been prosecuted for police and forensic conduct in the Kiszko case.

'Police patronising'

In the Lawrence case, Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, told the Stephen Lawrence inquiry: "I deeply regret that we have not brought Stephen's racist murderers to justice and I would like to personally apologise ... to Mr and Mrs Lawrence for our failure".

Of course it is not disputed, even by Sir Paul, that there are racists in the Metropolitan Police force. But institutional racism is denied, because, as Condon says: "I sincerely believe these issues did not influence this tragic case".

Mr and Mrs Lawrence, claiming 'institutional racism', suggest the police investigating their son's murder in April 1993 were patronising. In my experience in dealing with the police I have rarely found them to be anything other than patronising – it would seem to be an occupational disease.

As always with these British institutions in both the Kiszko and Lawrence cases, the police participants seem more concerned with covering their own arses than trying to get things straight. But the story is all too common: one of forensic evidence lost or withheld, statements from witnesses not taken, items wrongly filed, documents lost, 'scene of crime' evidence crudely contaminated.

To call this kind of thing 'institutionalised racism' is to lend sheer incompetence a kind of glamour and sophistication it doesn't deserve. This kind of clumsy conduct is not just confined to the police, but infects the Crown Prosecution Service as well.

Racism in the common culture

It may be that there is statistical and anecdotal evidence of racism in the police. The editorial in *The Independent* on 2nd October argued "that there is racism in the police force, that it is sometimes consciously applied, and that it is more prevalent than previously thought, is perfectly apparent from the Stephen Lawrence case. It is also the

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See inside for
details of the new
Freedom Press
books
(pages 4 and 5)

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 59 No. 20

17th October 1998

50p

On the Asian financial crisis ...

East Asia seen from South Asia

It may be interesting to sample some Asian perspectives on the East Asian crisis. For example, opinion in South Asia, rather distant culturally and geographically from the epicentres of world 'turbulence'. The Centre for Society and Religion in Colombo, Sri Lanka, publishes a dissident monthly journal titled *Social Justice*. Professor M.A. Oommen of the Institute for Social Science, New Delhi, comments in a recent issue on the paradoxical fact that Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand, whose economies are due to contract over the next year as a result of the regional crisis, "have been hailed as paragons of economic virtues", in, for example, the 1993 World Bank report *East Asian Miracle*. Oommen points out that the liberalisation of foreign exchange and foreign investment controls has led to the 'decoupling' of the real and the financial economies, a process which is 'now almost complete', with \$2 trillion moving around the world every day – \$6000 trillion a year – when world GDP is only \$27 trillion and world 'trade' is around \$11 trillion. In other words, "The real economy's foreign exchange transactions is not more than 2.5%

of the total foreign exchange transactions". This has introduced a new kind of risk into the investment decisions of transnational corporations (TNCs) – what Oommen calls 'foreign exchange risk'. "Any company holding only one currency or making investments in terms of one currency runs the risk of putting all eggs in one basket. Under such a situation, when a currency is devalued, the company suffers serious asset depreciation. *This risk could be more than political risks (e.g. threat of nationalisation) or any market risk, e.g. such as a fall in demand*". Under such a circumstance, currency traders and speculators rule the roost. Even central banks are rendered helpless. The reserves of all the central banks put together do not add up to \$640 billion, which is not equivalent to even a few hours of transactions per day" (Emphasis added).

Professor Oommen notes that recently the tiger economies had become more 'exposed' to foreign control. "Thailand's debt to foreign banks jumped from \$29 billion in 1993 to \$69 billion by mid-1997, 70% of which had a maturity of less than one year ... At the time of the crisis, South Korea had a total borrowing of over \$100 billion". Money was

funnelled into unproductive areas, including real estate and share speculation. The collapse of Thailand's real estate sector was one major factor behind the speculative attack on the Thai *baht* (an attack led by George Soros, as it happens). Oommen comments: "In brief it is the private sector (promoted for its efficiency) and not the much maligned public sector that brought ruin in East Asia."

In today's *Daily News* (the leading English language daily newspaper of Sri Lanka), Dr Gamani Corea also considers "Lessons from the Asian financial crisis", and comes to much the same conclusions. He points out that "It is implausible that the Asian tigers could have sustained rates of expansion so high and for so long, nearly transforming their economies, while all the time the so-called 'fundamentals' were not right." Weaknesses and excesses existed, but were not so common as to lead to a re-enactment of the same crisis in country after country. "If anything was wrong, it was the fact that the nations exposed themselves excessively to footloose speculative movements of capital and to short-term capital flows, with no regulations or control mechanisms set up in advance". Corea suggests that "the

immediate causes of the current crisis have not been an over-investment in real estate, or the corruption and crony capitalism that we read about – which are to be found in all the economies in the world, not only in East Asia. The central fact is that East Asia became very dependent on foreign investors, *whose concern was not whether a country had its fundamentals in order, but what other speculators were thinking*. This created a very volatile situation and ultimately a chain reaction of crises" (Emphasis added).

Dr Corea points out that there have been no serious North-South negotiations regarding international development cooperation for fifteen years: "All the changes which the South has been pushing – tariff preference for developing countries, concessional aid targets, commodity [price] stabilisation arrangements, codes for the transfer of technology and restrictive business practices – have been put aside. *As a result, the whole burden of action, and virtually the whole focus of attention, is now being placed on the internal domestic policies of developing countries*. Developing countries are being told that now there is an express train called 'globalisation and liberalisation'. If they get aboard, they will be carried on a great distance; but, if they fail to do so, they will be left behind and marginalised." North-South dialogue has been "Replaced by a sort of 'do-it-yourself kit' for developing countries, which are told that they don't need big discussions and conferences on international cooperation, aid flows, the terms of trade and so on. They need only privatise, liberalise, deregulate, balance their budgets, and so on."

Returning to Professor Oommen's analysis, Oommen has several recommendations. Among them is strong support for the so-called 'Tobin Tax'. In 1972, the Nobel Prize-winner for economics, James Tobin, suggested a tax on speculative financial movements, of 0.5%. This suggestion was repeated in the 1994 UN Development Programme's Human Development Report. The current yield from such a tax would be \$3 trillion a year, ten times the size of India's entire GDP. Oommen comments: "Apart from [being] a source of funds to promote human welfare, [the] Tobin tax could ensure some measure of accountability from the tribe of speculators."

Regular readers will be sad to learn that the Goldman Sachs sell-off has been called off, after giving "full consideration to the volatile state of global financial markets and the disproportionate impact on the financial services sector". The disproportionate impact of speculator-driven financial volatility on the lives of millions of Asia's poor is a matter for regret, no doubt, but the fact that Goldman Sachs' 190 partners are not to become rich as Croesus is a tragedy of Greek proportions. After all they have done for us ...

John Rety

Milan Rai

Serbia, Albania, NATO and the

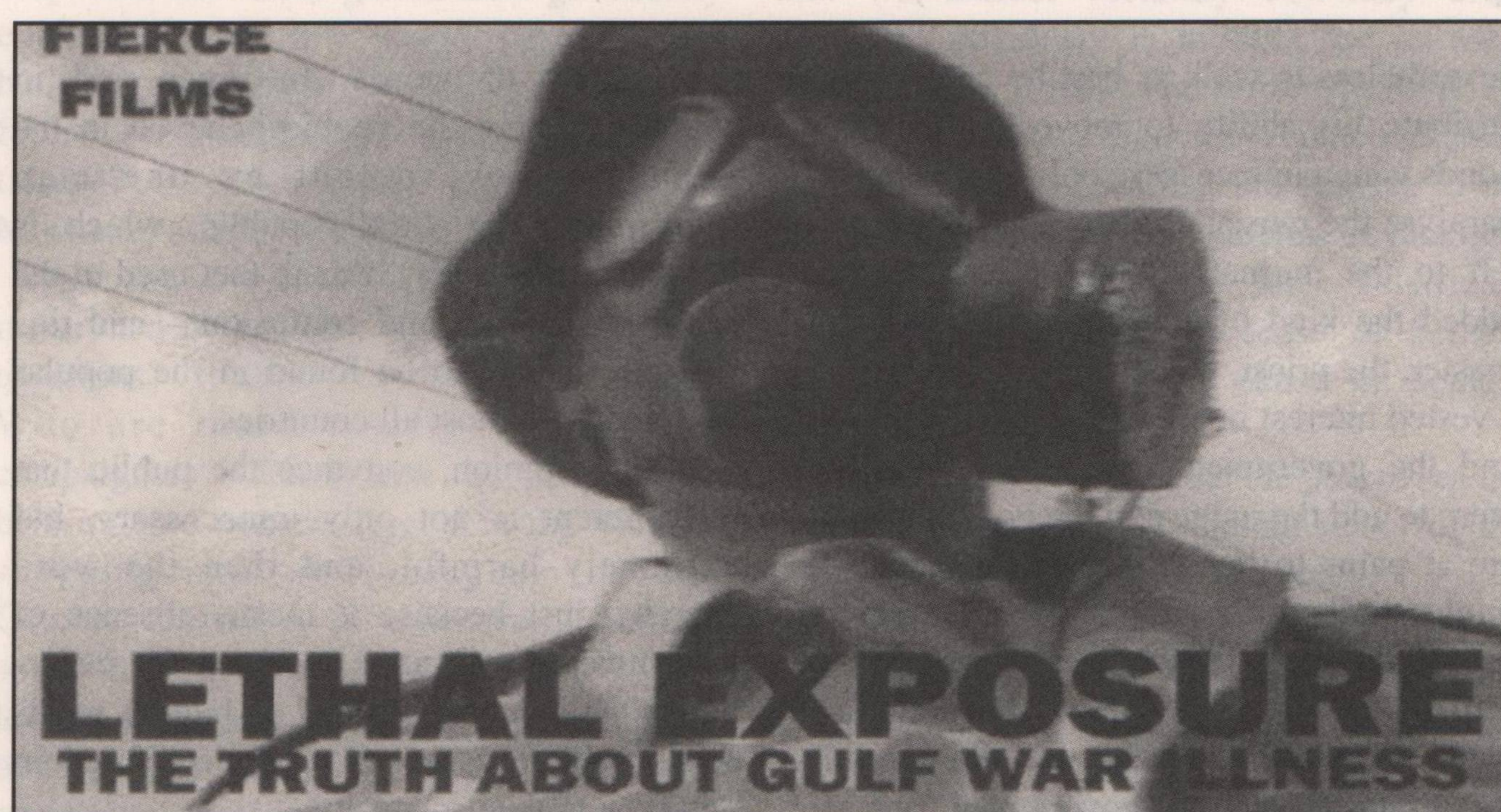
Insecurity Council

Wars are the very antithesis of anarchist philosophy. Our argument against war remains the same as it was when anarchists and other socialists opposed the wars in 1914, 1939, 1952 and so on. Anarchists have consistently opposed the wars of capitalism and militarism this century and the international anarchist movement can claim great credit in the containment of many aggressive war attempts by governments, faced with domestic crises, reverting to the old trick of using foreign wars in order to divert the working people's attention from their nepotistic mismanagement of affairs.

Freedom, founded in 1886, has consistently opposed all wars fostered by sabre-rattling nationalistic governments. Once negotiations stop, jaw-jaw becomes war-war.

The casualties in human life and to resources are tremendous. The Gulf War, which was opposed by *Freedom* and by the entire international anarchist movement, was the cause of great civilian suffering – which alas continues to the present day. But it is also conveniently forgotten by war propagandists such as Mr Cook that in the last war this country alone suffered 54,000 casualties of healthy soldiers going to the Middle East and returning with what is referred to as 'Gulf War syndrome'.

Space does not allow us to go into the full details, but we wish to draw attention to the documentary film *Lethal Exposure*, which is



still looking for a distributor brave enough to show the film country-wide. It examines the connection between the illness and an *unlicensed drug* which was given to troops in the Gulf War. The accusation this film makes is astounding: "54,000 British soldiers were sent to the Gulf 100% fit. When they returned they were not 100% fit".

The present threat of war and of bombing is a cynical attempt by western governments trying to extend the frontiers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

At the same time, Britain is *trying to retain its seat on the Security Council*, a procedure which is blatantly obvious. Should of course any other country be in a position to 'outbid' Mr Cook's government (yes, we know there

is a Mr Blair and a Mr Brown also involved) in their readiness to send arms, aeroplanes and troops, then that country might take Britain's seat on the Security Council.

But then what is the qualitative difference between your local drug dealer and governmental drug pushers who have not been prosecuted for supplying unlicensed (untried) illegal drugs and thereby endangering the lives of their own soldiers!

We have this to say to Mr Cook: stop posturing. And if Britain will lose its seat on the 'Insecurity Council', the wealth we pour into armaments could be diverted to pay towards the cost of the rehabilitation of the victims of war in all countries.

Sex and Kinky Law & Order

I would like to take up Joy Wood's invitation (*Freedom*, 19th September) and Talk About Sex. Well, being English I won't talk about actual sex, but about some points raised by her interesting report.

Specifically I would like to consider the situation of the law in Britain regarding various aspects of sex, from prostitution (not actually illegal, but soliciting for the purpose of it) to pornography (by which I mean any medium dealing explicitly with sexual activity, or fantasies concerning such activities) where the British law, requiring opinion on the tendency of such material to 'deprave and corrupt' is, as a famous QC put it, as clear as a camel's arse in a sand storm.

As an anarchist my view is that all matters sexual are for those involved to decide, requiring only the informed consent (a matter of common sense) of participants, or those otherwise involved. It is your body, your sensations, your life. The 'otherwise involved' rider does potentially open the door to the social effect argument. Homophobic Lord Devlin notably used this in his attempt to stop changes in legislation in the '60s (*The Enforcement of Morality*, Oxford University Press, 1965). Basically, as was stated in the Spanner trial, some acts, no matter how secret, private, consented to, etc., are considered to damage society. Only if that society consists of weak-minded serfs who are considered unfit for the privileges their masters take for themselves, could such an argument have any chance – and then not much. The reasonable

use of 'otherwise involved' would mean being involved against one's will, say by couples fucking indiscreetly in a lift which others have to use.

As well as their belief in sexual freedom, anarchists can offer a pragmatic solution to what are seen as the secondary social problems arising from or around prostitution. And in addition to prostitution, there is no reason why it should not be applied to all sex workers. It is that of the workers' co-operative, where the business is owned and controlled by the producers of the goods or services. If prostitutes were allowed to work indoors, in premises they controlled, most of the currently perceived problems would disappear. The down-side, for anarchists, would be that streetworkers would be more exposed to action by the police.

Further down-sides of coming indoors would be that, as a conventional business, all the planning and tax liabilities would be incurred. But that may be considered acceptable for the security offered in working conditions.

While it is far from a state of freedom, the activity of the law is slowly changing with regard to prostitution, and the attitude of the authorities against sexually explicit media are being shuffled onto the mind and attitude police, that is HM Customs and Excise.

Although, in the good old British way, the laws are left laying about unaltered in case they are needed. Why is this? Some outbreak of liberality amongst the Authorities? I doubt it.

No, I suspect the answer lays in 'Europe'. Even the most depraved and corrupted Tories ex-public school masturbatory bum-hugger of the flog everybody and aren't women jolly strange variety appears, in public at least, to be in favour of the common market. Or at least what they think the common market means – Er, you know, free trade and all that sort of thing.

The trouble is those wily Europeans have written down what they mean by free trade in a common market. In order to avoid an infinite encyclopedia of regulations, exceptions, special cases – the sort of thing dear to the British bureaucratic heart – they made it very simple. Any good or product which is legally on sale in one Member State may be legally sold in all other Member States. That is what is meant by a free market in the European Union, of which Britain is a member. It's in the Maastricht Treaty, which the British government signed.

There is also the question of rights. I find it very strange that the most momentous change in personal status of British Subjects of Her Majesty since the grossly over-rated Magna Carta (1215), also occurred with the signature

of the Maastricht treaty. For the first time ever, the British, instead of being subjects with duties, became citizens with rights. Strange that the politicians never mention this, isn't it?

Citizens with rights just might be able to choose to be sex workers or many other things, simply because they have rights – something adjusting the medieval psyche of the courts and politicians will take a long time to achieve.

Let's get back to sex. Although Joy observes that many things sexual are illegal in this country, this can only mean that, since those goods or products are legally available in other EU States, the kinky old British government is breaching the Treaty and breaking the law. But we always knew they were nasty authoritarian swine, as are all governments, did we not?

So, in theory, anything from prostitution to pornography may be legally traded in this green, pleasant, and European country of ours. You would not be breaking the law, but they would if they tried to stop you. But, naturally, taking them to their courts is a very difficult proposition.

Paradoxical, is it not, that the sooner anarchists (in matters of prostitution and pornography at least) start behaving within the law, the greater freedom we will all gain?

Colin Johnson

The word 'Anarchy' comes from the Greek and its literal meaning is 'without government': the condition of a people who live without a constituted authority, without government.

Before such an organisation had begun to be considered both possible and desirable by a whole school of thinkers and accepted as the objective of a party, which has now become one of the most important factors in the social struggles of our time, the word anarchy was universally used in the sense of disorder and confusion; and it is to this day used in that sense by the uninformed as well as by political opponents with an interest in distorting the truth.

We will not enter into a philological discussion, since the question is historical and not philological. The common interpretation of the word recognises its true and etymological meaning; but it is a derivative of that meaning due to the prejudiced view that government was a necessary organ of social life, and that consequently a society without government would be at the mercy of disorder, and fluctuate between the unbridled arrogance of some, and the blind vengeance of others.

The existence of this prejudice and its influence on the public's definition of the word anarchy, is easily explained. Man, like all living beings, adapts and accustoms himself to the conditions under which he lives, and passes on acquired habits. Thus, having being born and bred in bondage, when the descendants of a long line of slaves started to think, they believed that slavery was an essential condition of life, and freedom seemed impossible to them. Similarly, workers who for centuries were obliged, and therefore accustomed, to depend for work, that is bread, on the goodwill of the master, and to see their lives always at the mercy of the owners of the land and of capital, ended by believing that it is the master who feeds them, and ingenuously ask one how would it be possible to live if there were no masters.

In the same way, someone whose legs had been bound from birth but had managed

Malatesta's 'Anarchy'

We reproduce here the first paragraphs of Errico Malatesta's classic essay, 'Anarchy'. There will be a discussion at the Anarchist Bookfair on 'Malatesta in London', while Colin Ward in this issue of *Freedom* refers to Marie Louise Berneri's stressing "the simplicity of Malatesta's anarchist propaganda".

Written in Italian in 1891, the first English translation of 'Anarchy' was serialised in *Freedom* from September 1891 to June 1892. A new translation, with an introduction by Vernon Richards, is available from Freedom Press at £1.95 (post free inland, 15% overseas).

nevertheless to walk as best he could, might attribute his ability to move to those very bonds which in fact serve only to weaken and paralyse the muscular energy of his legs.

If to the normal effects of habit is then added the kind of education offered by the master, the priest, the teacher, etc., who have a vested interest in preaching that the masters and the government are necessary; if one were to add the judge and the policeman who are at pains to reduce to silence those who might think differently and be tempted to propagate their ideas, then it will not be difficult to understand how the prejudiced view of the usefulness of, and the necessity for, the master and the government took root in the unsophisticated minds of the labouring masses.

Just imagine if the doctor were to expound to our fictional man with the bound legs a theory, cleverly illustrated with a thousand invented cases to prove that if his legs were freed he would be unable to walk and would defend his bonds and consider as his enemy anyone who tried to remove them.

So, since it was thought that government was necessary and that without government there could only be disorder and confusion, it was natural and logical that anarchy, which means absence of government, should sound like absence of order.

Nor is the phenomenon without parallel in

the history of words. In times and in countries where the people believed in the need for government by one man (monarchy), the word republic, which is government by many, was in fact used in the sense of disorder and confusion – and this meaning is still to be found in the popular language of almost all countries.

Change opinion, convince the public that government is not only unnecessary, but extremely harmful, and then the word anarchy, just because it means absence of government, will come to mean for everybody: natural order, unity of human needs and the interests of all, complete freedom within complete solidarity.

Those who say therefore that the anarchists have badly chosen their name because it is wrongly interpreted by the masses and lends itself to wrong interpretations, are mistaken. The error does not come from the word but from the thing; and the difficulties anarchists face in their propaganda do not depend on the name they have taken, but on the fact that their concept clashes with all the public's long established prejudices on the function of government, or the State as it is also called.

Before going on, it would be as well to make oneself clear on this word State, which in our opinion is the cause of the real misunderstanding.

Anarchists, including this writer, have used the word State, and still do, to mean the sum

total of the political, legislative, judiciary, military and financial institutions through which the management of their own affairs, the control over their personal behaviour, the responsibility for their personal safety, are taken away from the people and entrusted to others who, by usurpation or delegation, are vested with the powers to make the laws for everything and everybody, and to oblige the people to observe them, if need be, by the use of collective force.

In this sense the word State means government, or to put it another way, it is the impersonal abstract expression of that state of affairs, personified by government: and therefore the terms abolition of the State, Society without the State, etc., describe exactly the concept which anarchists seek to express; of the destruction of all political order based on authority, and the creation of a society of free and equal members based on a harmony of interests and the voluntary participation of everybody in carrying out social responsibilities.

But the word has many other meanings, some of which lend themselves to misunderstanding, especially when used with people whose unhappy social situation has not given them the opportunity to accustom themselves to the subtle distinctions of scientific language, or worse still, when the word is used with political opponents who are in bad faith and who want to create confusion and not understanding.

Thus the word State is often used to describe a special kind of society, a particular human collectivity gathered together in a particular territory and making up what is called a social unit irrespective of the way the members of the said collectivity are grouped or of the state of relations between them. It is also used simply as a synonym for society. And because of these meanings given to the word State, opponents believe, or rather they pretend to believe, that anarchists mean to abolish every social bond, all collective work, and to condemn all men to living in a state of isolation, which is worse than living in conditions of savagery.

Errico Malatesta

At Doe House Hill open-cast mine it's ... Profits before people

The wheels of justice grind slowly and relentlessly on. Almost one year after the disruptive events at Doe House Hill open-cast mine at Tibshelf, Derbyshire, and the subsequent occupation of the offices of the mine's owner H.J. Banks in nearby Chesterfield (reported in *Freedom*, 29th November 1997), nineteen activists have been found guilty by a stipendiary magistrate of "watching and besetting a place of work" – not a carry over from the eighteenth century, but an offence under the catch-all union bashing Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992. Without this law the unfortunately under-funded Derbyshire Police would have been candidates for the Keystone Coppery award.

Police can always use the 'Ways and Means Act (Miscellaneous Provisions)', when they are faced with uncertain situations. A kind of mix-and-match law enforcement, it provides for the creative use of legislation intended for other purposes – in this case union bashing law is used against environmental activists. Perhaps they were shocked that the environmentalists had linked their action to the campaign against pit closures, the destruction of communities and the system of private profit, public costs – as the magistrate admitted, the "defendants all had strongly held, legitimate and reasonable views on the adverse environmental and other effects of open-cast mining".

Perhaps not, for they originally arrested the original 41 people on the pretext of burglary. As the magistrate noted, "Chief Inspector Johnson [the senior officer at the scene] had decided right at the outset that all of the protesters who remained on the premises would be arrested." Despite this, "there was no warning by police that arrests were likely". The defendants were granted police bail (because there was no evidence of burglary), so that the prosecution service could dig up another offence. However only 30 of the 41 arrestees deemed it their duty to return to be charged with 'Aggravated Trespass' and 'Besetting ...'. Of these, eleven defendants agreed to be bound over to keep the peace, while the rest contested the charges, of which aggravated trespass was by far the most serious, implying as it did that the activists had had something to do with bringing Doe House Hill to a two week halt and costing the company tens of thousands of pounds in damage and lost production. This charge, however, was thrown out, as the police, although they placed people at the scene with 'verbals', and observations about muddy boots, had not managed to arrive at the scene for a good three hours. This was why Chief Inspector Johnson had to have his revenge for getting so much egg on his face. In the magistrate's words "there were worrying examples of exaggeration in his [the Chief Inspector's] evidence. He conducted "pretence negotiations", and when "sufficient reinforcements ... were available announced that all the protesters would be arrested for burglary."

Nobody however could deny the occupation of H.J. Banks, and although the protesters had only asked that a fax be sent on the office fax machine to the Department of the Environment, this was somehow construed as "intended to compel someone to not do something which they had a legal right to do (i.e. work), or to compel someone to do something they had a legal right to refuse to do". So the nineteen remaining activists were found guilty of this.

The trial has now been adjourned for two

weeks for sentencing. Ominously the magistrate relied for all his judgements about the intentions of the protesters in Chesterfield, on the earlier events at Tibshelf. He has indicated an intention to consider the serious nature of the events at Tibshelf for which no-one was convicted, in his sentencing decisions.

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of
Freedom will be dated
31st October, and the
last day for copy
intended for this issue
will be first post on
Thursday 22nd October

(continued from page 8)

common experience of many people who are born with the wrong colour of skin, who are stopped too hastily if their are driving too flash a car or whose demeanour offends an officer."

The *Independent's* statement that Sir Paul, as Police Commissioner, is "dealing with a body of men and women with a canteen culture which [has] not quite caught up with the cutting edge of liberal attitudes to race" is all too obvious. But that 'canteen culture' is probably more a part of our common culture and more enduring than any 'liberal attitudes' held in broadsheet editorials or on

The Unintelligent Services

Life could have been easier for the producers of *Undercurrents* when we investigated the shadowy world of phone-tapping and secret files compiled by Britain's security agencies. Finding the entrance to the headquarters of the intelligence agency MI5 would have proven easier if we had thought about asking the local council office.

A national newspaper this week revealed that the so-called intelligence services had placed the entire blueprints for the MI5 and MI6 buildings in their local Westminster and Lambeth council planning permission offices, which are open for public perusal.

A report in the *Sunday Times* revealed that: "Not only do the plans clearly mark the entrances and exits in the building, but also all the fire escapes, personnel and service lifts, stairways and air conditioning shafts ... Documents accompanying the maps reveal the names of senior MI5 officials and provide technical descriptions of counter-terrorist measures designed to protect the buildings."

After being tracked by CCTV cameras and a helicopter along the banks of the River Thames, a cheeky *Undercurrents* investigator succeeded in gaining entry to the Millbank headquarters of MI5 under the pretext of

applying for a job. With a video camera rolling, he managed to confront two agents of the notorious covert agency about the files of 250,000 suspects compiled by MI5, which include many on environmental activists.

An *Undercurrents* spokesperson said: "During our investigations we revealed the massive resources which the nation's secret agents are applying in order to gather information on people whose supposed threat to the nation's security has been to sit in a tree or wave a banner. It is difficult to see how the assumptions of these so-called 'intelligence' agents, who spend £240 million on the security of their own headquarters and then leave details of how to bypass all their security measures in the local council office, can be relied upon."

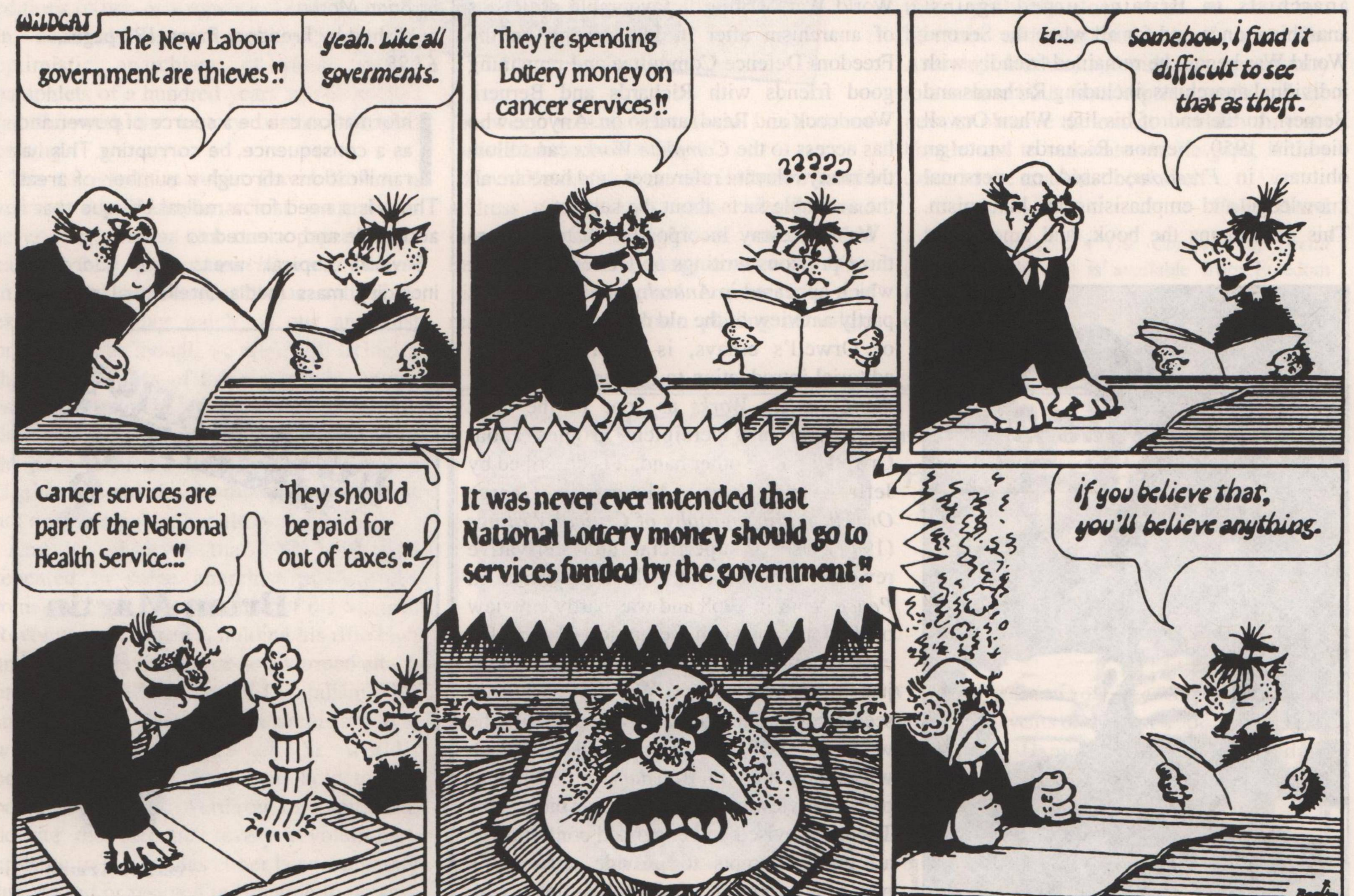
Our investigations during the production of *Bugger Off* also revealed British Telecom's links with MI5 during phone-tapping procedures. In another investigation, *Pig Brother*, we also expose the faces of the special squad of environmental officers involved in compiling files on the growing number of environmental activists. Based at Scotland Yard, the Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) have appeared at protests up and down the country with video cameras.

Civilian photographers are also employed by FIT to record people attending protests. One civilian photographer, who normally does forensic photographic work, spoke on a hidden camera about her role in photographing people attending protests: "I normally do work that benefits people, you know, but these people [protesters] are harmless". She was later sacked, according to a police source who works with FIT.

Our undercover investigations revealed that FIT are also willing to pay for any information on activists. Evidence of regular phone-tapping and e-mail interceptions are exposed. Scotland Yard later tried to dismiss the investigative documentary *Pig Brother* by *Undercurrents* as being "heavily edited".

Netwatch

Arturo Ui



George Orwell at Home

George Orwell at Home (and among the Anarchists): Essays and Photographs
Freedom Press, paperback £6.95

At the beginning of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith buys "a peculiarly beautiful book" with "smooth creamy paper", which he uses to write the diary at the heart of the novel. This peculiarly beautiful book, printed on smooth creamy paper, is not a diary but a photograph album of a remarkable kind. It contains the photographs of George Orwell and his adopted son Richard Blair which were taken just after the end of the Second World War by Vernon Richards and Marie-Louise Berneri. Many of them have become familiar during the half-century since Orwell's death, illustrating books and articles and other items by and about Orwell all over the world, but here for the first time all fifty of them are gathered in one place. Pictures of Orwell with his son, dressing him, playing with him, taking him for a walk in his pushchair; of his son on his own, in a series of what look like old polyphotos; of Orwell on his own, showing his Indian sabre, rolling a cigarette or drinking a cup of tea, working at his carpentry bench or at his typewriter, just sitting quietly at home – all add up to an unusually intimate view of a very private man who, as is stated in the Publishers' Note, disliked being photographed.

But this isn't just a photograph album, for the pictures are scattered through a large-format 75-page book which also contains three essays on Orwell by anarchist writers. Richards and Berneri were of course leading members of the anarchist group which produced the paper successively called *Spain and the World*, *Revolt!*, *War Commentary*, and *Freedom*. They got to know Orwell when he came back from the Spanish Civil War, after escaping death first in military battle against the Fascists on the Aragon the front and then in political struggle against the Communists back in Barcelona, and joined International Anti-Fascist Solidarity, the anarchist front organisation formed by Emma Goldman. And although Orwell, who had been sympathetic with the anarcho-syndicalists in Spain and therefore with the anarchists in Britain, turned against anarchism once and for all when the Second World War began, he remained friendly with individual anarchists, including Richards and Berneri, to the end of his life. When Orwell died, in 1950, Vernon Richards wrote an obituary in *Freedom*, based on personal knowledge and emphasising his humanism. This item opens the book, and emerges as



Photograph by Vernon Richards

one of the most impressive pieces ever written on Orwell.

In 1955, soon after the television production of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the publication of a selection of the Richards-Beneri photographs in *Picture Post*, Colin Ward wrote a series of five articles in *Freedom* about Orwell's relationship with anarchism, based on detailed knowledge of his writings in periodicals as well as books and using long quotations from several of the writings which were not easily available at that time. The resulting essay, which is the best single discussion of the subject, much less tendentious than George Woodcock's better-known writings, is the second item in the book.

The third is a long essay by Nicolas Walter on the same subject, making use of material in the new *Complete Works of George Orwell*, edited by Peter Davison and published in twenty volumes three months ago. This tells us almost more than we want to know about Orwell's ambiguous relationship with anarchism, calling himself a 'Tory anarchist' in his youth, fighting alongside anarcho-syndicalists in Spain, working first with anarchists and then against anarchists before and during the Second World War, writing unfavourable criticisms of anarchism after it, but serving on the Freedom Defence Committee and remaining good friends with Richards and Berneri, Woodcock and Read, and so on. Anyone who has access to the *Complete Works* can follow the many relevant references, and here are all the available facts about the subject.

Walter's essay incorporates material from three previous writings on Orwell. The first, which appeared in *Anarchy* in 1961 and was partly a review of the old one-volume edition of Orwell's essays, is described in the editorial introduction to the tenth volume of the *Complete Works* as "one of the most interesting and perceptive articles about Orwell"; on the other hand, it is described by Jeffrey and Valerie Meyers in *George Orwell: A Bibliography of Critical Writings* (1977) as "a superficial and derivative review"! The second, which appeared in *Peace News* in 1968 and was partly a review of the later four-volume edition of Orwell's essays, emphasised his brief pacifist phase just before the Second World War; it now seems certain that the anti-war pamphlet he wrote in 1938 has disappeared. The last, which appeared in *Freedom* in 1981, was partly a review of Bernard Crick's biography. The new revised and expanded conflation of all three attempts to provide not only a particular account of Orwell's links with

anarchism but also a general summary of his life and work and of subsequent writing on him as well.

Of course Orwell was not primarily important then and is not primarily interesting now on account of his opinions about anarchism or his relations with anarchists. As Walter says, he would probably be almost forgotten today if he hadn't written *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; yet he does live on, not just because of those two books and some of the immortal phrases in them, but because of a few dozen of the finest essays in English, and also because he still represents an independent nonconformist conscience of the left. He is one of the few people who can be imagined commenting on the world long after his death, along with William Morris and Edward Carpenter. It is all too easy to guess what he would say about our country today, not suffering under the

totalitarian dictatorship he feared and fought, but crushed between the twin evils of capitalism and bureaucracy and corrupted by the growth of a spectacular society beyond anything he could have imagined.

At a much more parochial level, it is harder to guess how he would have reacted to the fact that Canonbury, which he described in 1946 as "the decaying slum in which I live" and which appears as the shabby background of several of the photographs, became one of the most gentrified and desirable areas of North London; or indeed to the fact that his *Complete Works* cost £750, a recent four-volume collection of his reportage costs £100, and a new bibliography of his writings costs £55! On the other hand, this nice book from Freedom Press costs only £6.95 and is at the same fascinating to look at – elegantly designed by Charles Hall for Aldgate Press – and stimulating to read.

AF



Photograph by Vernon Richards

Another new title from Freedom Press

Information Liberation: challenging the corruptions of information power
by Brian Martin

published by Freedom Press, 192 pages, £7.95

Information can be a source of power and, as a consequence, be corrupting. This has ramifications through a number of areas. There is a need for a radical critique that is accessible and oriented to action.

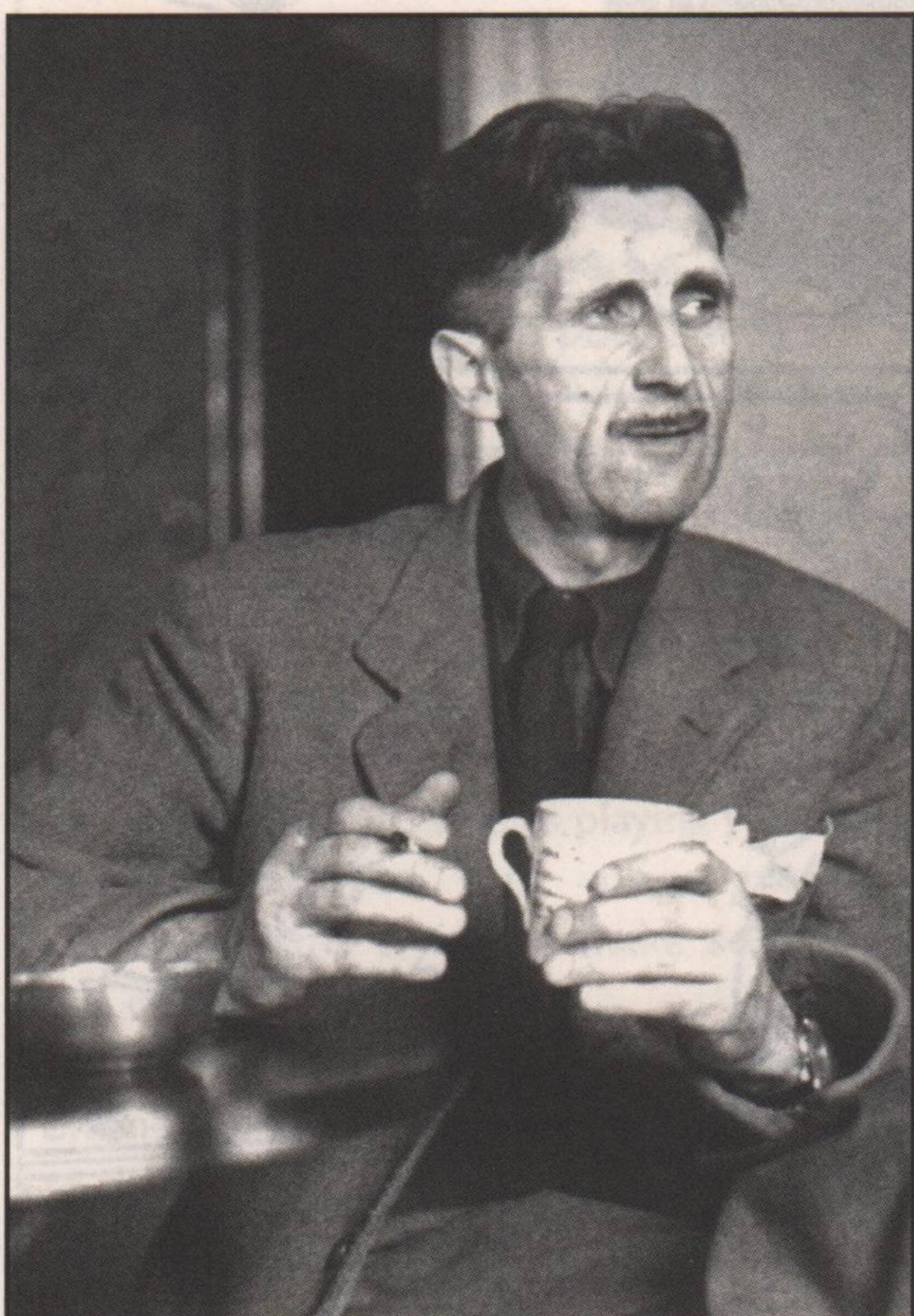
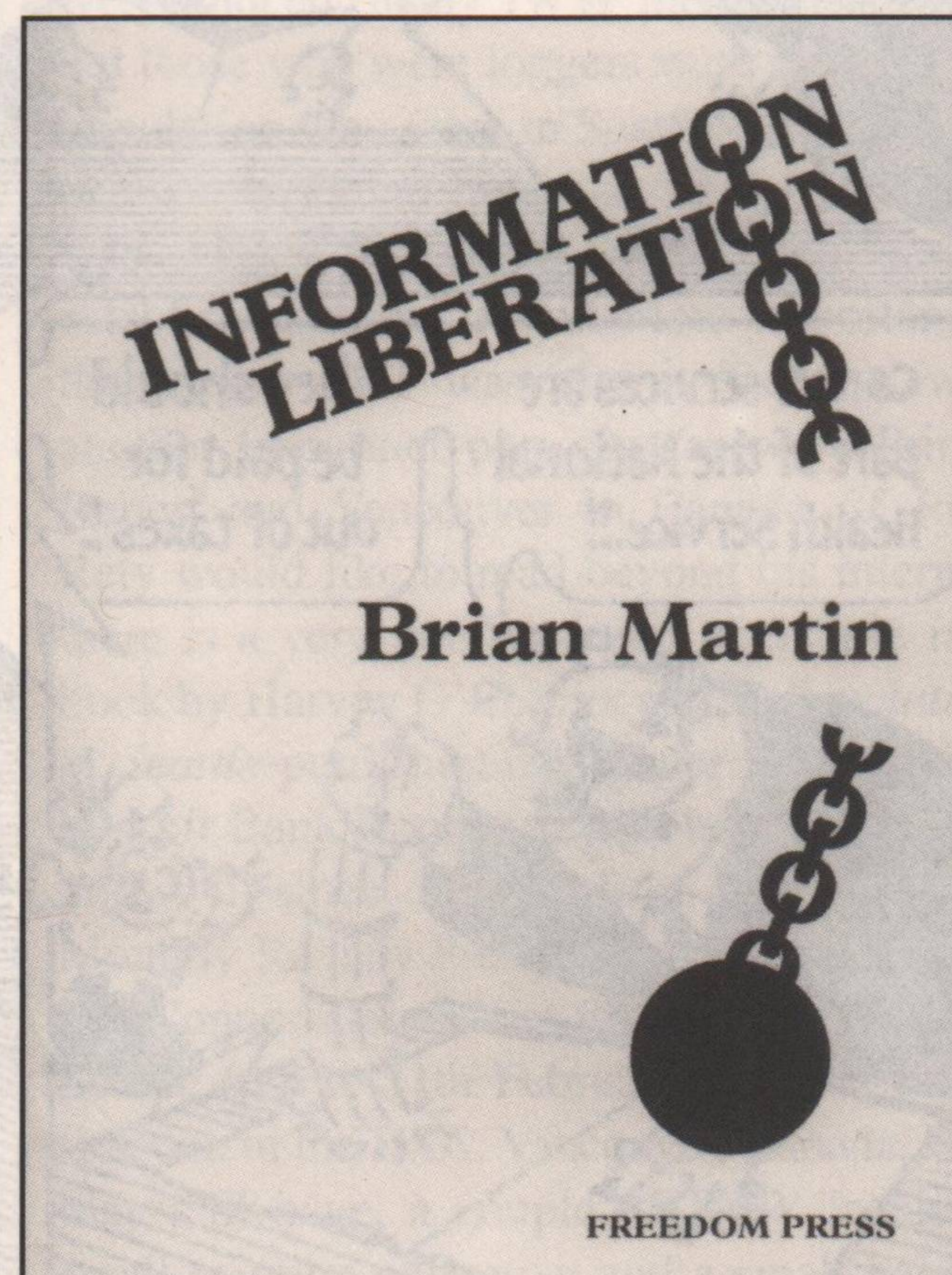
Several topical areas are addressed, including mass media, intellectual property,

surveillance and defamation. For each topic, a critique of problems is given, examples provided and options for action canvassed. Not every topic relevant to information power is addressed – that would be an enormous task – but rather a range of significant and representative topics.

The style is intended to combine accessibility and rigour. Arguments and evidence are given to explain perspectives rather than analyse them exhaustively. Many examples are used. The aim is to encourage critical thinking and present a strong point of view. References are given to useful sources and to document some points, but not to the extent of most scholarly papers.

Out of the vast amount of writing about information, there is relatively little that systematically presents a radical perspective. This book will fill a major gap in a very popular field. Several of the chapters – for example on intellectual property and defamation – provide what seems to be the most convenient critique of the field. The book will be of interest to activists and critics in a wide variety of fields and also could be used as a reading in courses on the information society and related topics.

The author, Brian Martin, teaches in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Among his other books, *Uprooting War* and *Social Defence*, *Social Change* are published by Freedom Press.



Photograph by Vernon Richards

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Making effective propaganda

The day of the Bookfair is the right occasion to reflect on the effectiveness of anarchist propaganda.

And throughout the history of anarchism as a proselytising movement, the most continually reprinted and translated propagandist has been Peter Kropotkin. And his most widely disseminated book was his manual for anarchist revolutionaries *The Conquest of Bread*.*

You and I can readily see the defects of this book, first published in French well over a century ago, but none of us has managed to produce a modern, universally applicable equivalent. We have all heard of the way in which it was read aloud to Spanish or Mexican peasants as a guide to their next step. "Read me some more of that beautiful Kropotkin," Zapata is said to have asked one of the Magon brothers.

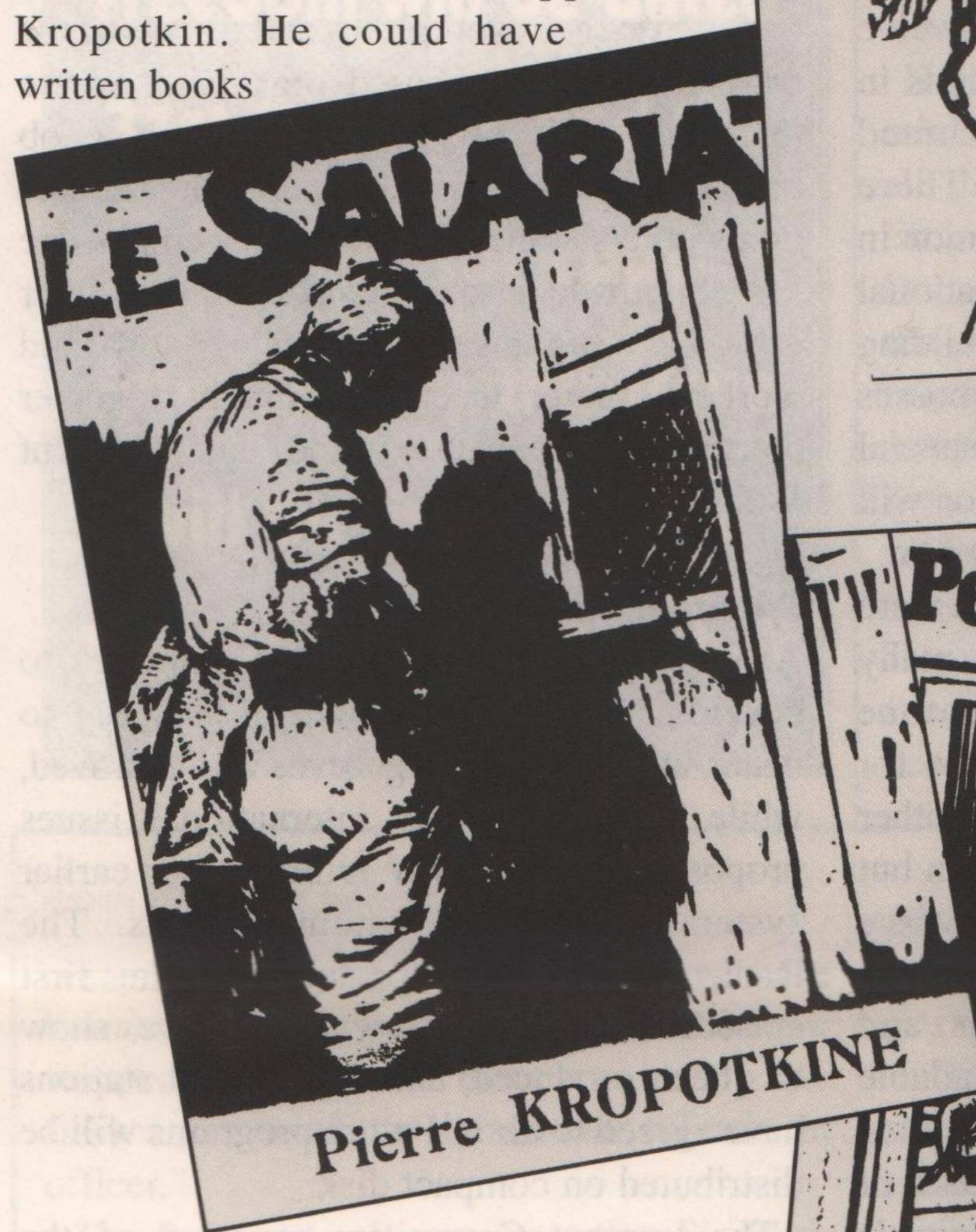
I have also been told of the way in which the Spanish translation was the basic anarchist text for peasants and newly-urbanised workers in Spain, and how it was used in Jewish agrarian settlements north of Buenos Aires in Argentina to introduce Yiddish-speaking immigrants, thoroughly familiar with that text in Yiddish or Russian, to the Spanish language. And of course that version of the book became a kind of certificate of revolutionary integrity in Spain itself.

A most thought-provoking item by John Rety in this journal for 5th September discusses an exhibition at Gothenburg in Sweden about the work of an artists' colony at Wörpswede in Germany, including an avant-garde design for that much-published book. John raised the interesting question that, "it remains a puzzle for me as to why anarchism has so many adherents and passionate advocates among the ranks of artists (poets, painters, musicians, philosophers and such like) whereas political anarchism musters less than lip service to artistic considerations."

I don't suppose that many contemporary poets, painters or musicians share Kropotkin's views on these arts, which were much like those of Tolstoy, but over the last hundred years graphic artists of every kind

have made covers for his huge output of books and pamphlets. And we have to stress that, whatever the issue, Kropotkin would set to work to produce an anarchist pamphlet about it, and that some of these books and pamphlets have been produced in many languages, just because nothing better had been written.

The point was made over 55 years ago by Marie Louise Berneri, stressing to an anarchist speaker the simplicity of Malatesta's anarchist propaganda. She added that "The same applies to Kropotkin. He could have written books



materialism; emphasis on the decentralisation and reorganisation of human society by the development of educational systems and work and living environments counter to the Capitalist modes ... Environments where people will welcome each day rather than look upon their work life as a necessary evil. Environments where communal decision making will respect and reflect the needs and opinions of the entire community rather than that of a

privileged few. We anarchists must always seek means of solving conflicts in a peaceful, non-authoritarian manner. We must learn how to communicate with those people in our communities who hold different views than ours ...

These are not unfamiliar aims, each of them requires a lifetime of social involvement, and there probably does exist an anarchist literature addressed to each of them. The Anarchist Bookfair provides an opportunity to examine both the old propaganda and the new, to observe the extent to which they get bought and to ruminate on the gaps, if they exist, in the anarchist bookshelf.

Colin Ward

* Peter Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread* (Elephant Editions) is available from Freedom Press at £4.95 (post free UK, please add 15% overseas).

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bigger than those of Marx around his theories but he had the courage to write penny pamphlets expressing his ideas in the most bare and simple form ... But at least he succeeded in being understood by the most illiterate workers and peasants."

My difficulty (as the editor of modern editions of two of Kropotkin's books) is in deciding how to present the optimistic anarchism of those penny pamphlets of a hundred years ago to readers familiar with the history of the twentieth century.

The American anarchist David Koven, a veteran who buys anarchist journals in several languages, sent me a paper of his called *A Soliloquy on Anarchism and Culture* in which he remarks that: "Alas, with some exceptions, today much of our anarchist press reads as though we were still living in the halcyon days of the nineteenth century when Bakunin, Kropotkin, *et al* were sure that 'The Revolution', (an armed uprising of the peoples of the world that would sweep Capitalism into the dustbin of history) was not only attainable, but almost nigh."

And he observes that "We still find repeated in some anarchist publications romantic images such as that of the Spanish Revolutionary Warrior, holding his rifle high and urging his fellows on to an armed attack on the fascist defenders of Capitalism." He stresses that "Too many anarchists forget what a tires minority of the world's population we are. They still hold to this belief in a violent overthrow of Capitalism, despite the fact that every revolutionary uprising in history has either been ruthlessly suppressed or resulted in bringing to power

the very worst, dictatorial, inhumane individuals in their wake."

David Koven's conclusion is that we should address ourselves to "those practical and most powerful strengths of our anarchist imagery." For him these consist of: "Our vision of communal connection and responsibility; the down playing of vulgar

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Rich and Poor



Many times I have been asked my opinion on something on the box the previous night. This is an embarrassing question for I have not possessed a television set since the '60s. What put me off once and for all was seeing myself on some Muggeridge show with Stuart Christie, a nun and a chief of police, and Stuart and I were there to put the case for anarchism and why we did not need either the Church or the Police.

So far so good. The trouble was that as soon as I got into my stride the more Muggeridge was semaphoring frantically that I've said more than enough, even cutting the sound off at a certain point. Muggeridge even tried to intervene by asking the nun what she thought. She smiled sweetly and said nothing, perhaps obeying a vow of silence. She was right out of Chaucer, you know the one with the pendant carrying the inscription AMOR VINCIT OMNIA.

But to the point. At the evening showing I sat back to watch the show and then suddenly saw myself on the screen for the first time. Previously I have either missed the repeats or they were live broadcasts. Here then I was given a full dose anti-television vaccine, which cured me of television altogether.

There on the flickering scene I saw myself stammering, incoherent, getting flustered without the faintest ability to put the simplest point across. Cut and edited in such a manner that anybody watching that show would come to the conclusion that here was a figure of fun, probably escaped from an institution, certainly not worth listening to. It was pathetic. There was this tiny flickering figure mouthing nonsense whereas the opposition was well rehearsed, smooth and worldly.

I turned off the television then and never watched it since. A machine by which I was made into a cartoon character, I deduced, unerringly makes cartoon characters out of everybody else.

But later on when I worked with anarchist printers in Wapping (no set hours, no set wages, no job security but such marvellous conversations about last night's television show), they have 'filled me in' on what was the real purpose of television.

What else do you have comrades for, but to explain things to you? Things you always wanted to know. Especially about last night's horror film or soap opera.

"What you don't understand is that we only watch television so that we can tell our version the following day and play-out all the parts the way they should have been played, to teach Marilyn how to pout her lips."

Perhaps I missed a lot. All that football, all that glamour, all those murder and spy stories, all those informed conversations. But if you are an addict, say to football, I hear there is no more football coverage on the ordinary set and you have to go out to some expensive pub with the large screen to watch it.

But it is not the same as playing yourself, or even watching on your village green two amateur teams trying to make some sense out of a ridiculous game.

But never so ridiculous than seeing yourself on the box, a tiny puny figure, cleverly edited so that your dear mother would never forgive herself for giving birth to such a jammering idiot.

John Rety

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD IWW Assembly looks to future

Organising dominated a packed agenda at the IWW's 1998 General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, over the Labour Day weekend. More than 87 members attended, making this year's the largest such meeting in many decades.

General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Chase reported that membership has more than doubled since the 1995 Assembly, and is up 34% from last year. Over the last year the IWW has chartered Industrial Union Branches in Sedro Woolley, Washington (construction), Toronto (public service), Portland (entertainment and public service), San Francisco (marine transport) and Winnipeg (general distribution). Fourteen new General Membership Branch charters have been issued, and several new charter applications are in the works.

The IWW now has members in twelve countries, with the largest concentrations in Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. There continues to be strong interest in the union in Latin America and Africa. This international growth offers exciting possibilities for building an IWW truly capable of taking on the bosses on a global level, but it also raises financial and organisational issues which the union will continue to grapple with over the next year.

Indeed, the strains of our rapid growth were evident throughout the Assembly. So many branches were represented that the time allotted proved insufficient to allow for reports on the abundant organising and other activities now underway despite the firm but understanding efforts of co-chairs Missy Rohs and Tim Acott. More than two dozen proposed constitutional amendments and other resolutions also overwhelmed available discussion time, and an ad hoc committee was appointed to continue the process of reviewing and refining these proposals before they are presented to the membership for a union-wide vote.

The highlight of the two days was probably the talk by IWW and ILWU member Robert Irminger, who is facing a lawsuit in retaliation for his alleged role in organising picketing of the Neptune Jade last year in solidarity with Mersey dockers. Irminger was singled out by the bosses because he served as picket captain during the four-day action. He told delegates that IWW members played an critical role on the picket line, constituting half the pickets at one point. The recent organisation of the San Francisco Bay Ports Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union 510 Branch is, at least in part, an outgrowth of our efforts to build solidarity for the Mersey dockers in their long struggle.

The ongoing drive at Skagit Pacific in Washington state was also reported on, as was the recent organisation of IWW branches in Edmonton, Alberta, and Victoria, British Columbia. Fellow Workers from Austin, Texas, reported on their successful fight to force a local developer to pay some \$28,000 in unpaid wages to 125 mostly undocumented workers there.

Members broke into smaller groups Saturday afternoon for more focussed discussions on organising strategy, working within the business unions, constitutional revision, international structure, the *Industrial Worker* and other topics. Sunday morning, we broke into industrial meetings after nominations were completed. Maritime workers from San Francisco brought copies of their new newsletter to spark discussion. Many Wobs work as casuals on the Oakland docks, and the MTW is undertaking health and safety training to educate casuals on their rights.

Public Service IU 670 workers discussed organising within the already largely unionised public sector, which has many legal restrictions including making strikes illegal and not being able to bargain over pay. 670ers also discussed the nature of working for private and publicly funded non-profits, where workers are often expected to make wage concessions and other sacrifices for a 'common good' which the bosses do not allow them to shape the vision of. Because of the nature of IU 670, it was generally agreed that the democratic principles of the IWW would be embraced by others in the industry, especially non-profit workers and government employees saddled with undemocratic or lazy unions. We will be developing literature to address this issue.

Education workers shared stories of efforts to organise their workplaces and discussed the prospects for issue-based organising where there was little prospect of winning a job branch or job control in the near future. Education workers at the University of Memphis are launching a local newsletter as part of their efforts to organise the campus' low-paid workers. Other meetings brought together construction, restaurant and entertainment Wobs.

Spreading the word

A proposal by the Literature Committee to develop an indexed archive of material to better support organising drives was approved, while a workshop on international issues proposed that the IWW return to our earlier system of regional administrations. The Radio Committee reported that the first episode of the *Soapboxing the Airwaves* show has been produced, and that several stations have agreed to air it. Future programs will be distributed on compact disk.

The Internet Committee reported on the dramatic growth of the union's on-line

resources, which now includes six servers in three countries. While the network makes possible a much wider geographical distribution of IWW information, the burden of maintaining it falls fairly heavily on the shoulders of a few branches and individual members. F.W. Deke Nihilson noted that the small number of volunteers maintaining the network leaves the system vulnerable, and called for volunteers to take on a variety of support tasks ranging from helping members get on-line to more advanced technical support. Nihilson also noted the need for increased financial support, both to maintain the existing service and to enable the San Francisco Branch to secure more band-width to accommodate growing usage.

And the Organising Strategies workshop discussed the different conditions facing organisers in the US and Canada and the need to provide better training and support, particularly for first-time organisers. Participants agreed that the key to successful organising was not winning Labour Board certification, but rather establishing a functioning union presence on the job. Even where the union remains a minority presence, real improvements can often be won through workplace struggles and the union can build legitimacy and broader support. A variety of strategies for sharing organising skills were discussed, including regional tours, training sessions incorporated into regional meetings, and videotaped presentations on labour law and organising tactics. Participants also discussed the need for more reflection on our organising efforts, perhaps in the form of a regular section in the General Organisation Bulletin.

IWW members can look forward to a bulging referendum ballot next month, addressing issues ranging from a dues hike to changes in the provisions for membership eligibility to our international structure.

Netwatch Watched

Comment on JR's 'sound bites' from the internet (*Freedom*, 5th September). Seattle is not a 'logging country'. It is a large city which began as a town, a port. The whole of the northwest of North America from British Columbia as far south as northern California and as far east as Idaho and Montana was and is logging country. In order to build Seattle trees had to be cut down. At one early point those wealthy who controlled the town even pushed part of a steep hill into Puget Sound to make a more gradual slope for their convenience. There were, indeed, many IWW members around, but those who were loggers were an itinerant population who were in Seattle between jobs or on a weekend binge on Skid Row. That was where the cheap hotels and eating establishments were, but more importantly, the hiring hall was there. Tacoma was another important port city, as were Prince Rupert and Vancouver in Canada. If John Rety would like to read beyond his internet, there is a very good account of Seattle in a book by Harvey O'Connor called *Revolution in Seattle* published in a paper back edition by Left Bank Books (though he may already know it since it was first published by Monthly Review Press).

O'Connor claims that the general strike in Seattle (6th to 11th February 1919) was the first one in the USA. Vancouver, Canada, had, may still have, a couple of IWW locals: a small printing collective and a small bakery

collective. Tom Wayman, a well known Canadian poet and anarchist, was instrumental in forming an IWW local when he was working in a truck factory. I wonder how many in Seattle are actually industrial workers.

'Sedro Woolley' is a small town about fifty miles north of Seattle. It is still a logging town and boasts a statue of a logger at its entrance. At least three towns in Washington have erected statues of Paul Bunyan and his Blue Ox, Babe, to indicate their connections with logging, which, not incidentally, is far from finished. However, modern loggers are usually on the wrong side of the popular left issues of the day, and I would bet that there are no wobblers among them.

Does JR have some information that the town, itself, is employing cheap labour to manufacture building modules for oil rigs off Siberia? It seems more likely to be one of the big lumber companies doing such business rather than a small town council. Is all this a demonstration of the unreliability of internet information or merely a mistake by the compiler? Sedro Woolley has small local fame because it was the home of Darius Kinsey, the first serious photographer of logging work, whose work has been published in books and reviewed during the last decade. Not incidentally to me, both my parents are in some of the photos because they both worked in logging camps, and I was born in Sedro Woolley.

Canadian Reader

Cowardice of the Peace Movement

Dear *Freedom*,

I received a copy of Peter Lumsden's article in your 1st August edition while incarcerated here in Darwin Prison on the northern tip of Australia. I reside here after our Nagasaki Day (9th August 1998) ploughshares (disarmament) action on uranium mining equipment at the Jabiluka mine in Kakadu. Peter's article is an attack on Christian-anarchist-pacifism, but primarily it is an attack on a God he has constructed and denies. If it is any comfort, I don't believe in the God he doesn't believe in either (straw man/straw God!). As Eric Fromm reminds us elsewhere, to define God is the beginning of idolatry.

Most of the men sharing the remand section here are Goddists – they are from indigenous communities whose unique languages, initiation scars and culture are clearly evident. Their economies and societies have been seized and sunk by White Australia. There are also a handful of Muslim fishermen from West Timor who have had their boat seized and sunk by the Australian Coast Guard. As in my last experience of incarceration (Texas, 1991-92) it is the poor who have the language of belief (in something that can't be explained). To generalise a little further, the First World (with the exception of

the US) is largely beyond belief. Europe is post-Christian, I think Peter over-rates the role of belief in God in propping up the Euro-imperial states. The establishment church in Europe, like the Royal families, have been largely reduced to protecting the architecture from the likes of Murdoch. (Actually, a closer look at the Euro-ploughshares movement you will see it is largely a secular phenomenon.)

Yes, Christianity has been co-opted by Empire ... no surprises there, look how quickly they co-opted punk rock, feminism, trade, unionism etc. They've had two thousand years to work on us.

I label myself a Christian-Anarchist-Pacifist (see *Demanding the Impossible* by Peter Marshall). I see Christianity's compromise of its implicit anarchist and pacifist orientations (formalised by the Constantine Shift in the 3rd Century) as fatal. 'Anarchist' and 'pacifist' are two words of negative definition – 'without government' and 'without violence' – so they are implicitly much better questions than answers (e.g. how are we to live without government or without violence?). Our lives should be experiments in answering such questions.

Ciaron O'Reilly

www.freespeech.org/ploughshares

Dear *Freedom*,

Pat Murtagh (3rd October) is mystified by my attack on Christian pacifists. I see his point. In my defence I would say I was attacking the tip of the iceberg. The real problem for which we should save our heavy artillery – to use his words – are, we would agree, capitalism or the USA (the terms are roughly synonymous). I see capitalism as being in large measure created and legitimised by Christianity – here I draw a lot on Max Weber (although he never made an explicit connection) – and thus the best way to overthrow capitalism is through a reformed Christianity, just as the Reformation ushered in capitalism, a New Reformation will see it out. This in turn assumes a very different view of humans from most *Freedom* readers. While I, like them, have a materialist philosophy, I am an idealist in my anthropology. To borrow Marxist terminology, my base is ideology (hopefully an essay which expands on this point will appear later in *The Raven*). Most of us believe that poverty and ignorance foster religion, essentially a Marxist viewpoint, but then have to explain why the USA, in spite of being rich and well educated, is passionately theistic (90%

believe in God) and have a prayer on their currency ('In God we trust'). Why, when you have it all (and they do), waste billions of dollars (and they do) on religion? The answer is, of course, that most essential of human emotions: guilt (though often reviled in these pages). They need the constant barrage of religious propaganda to shut out the screams of the poor. An identical mechanism is at work to legitimise patriarchy in the Lord's Prayer, the 'Our Father'.

We also feel that humanity is threatened in the opposite direction by religious fundamentalism and it often portrays itself as anti-capitalist, but once we see the religious native of capitalism with its 'economy' as a savage and unpredictable god to which all humanity must be sacrificed, we can see that these two forms of oppression are the same. What poisons the world today is the effluent from the decomposing body of God, and once truly buried then the healing earth will bring forth the flowers of the free societies.

In conclusion I was saddened by Pat saying the first rule of political action was to get away with it. That's shallow and cynical. Obviously the first rule is to be effective! The brilliant Ploughshares action of the four women at British Aerospace was effective – and put hope into human hearts around the world, especially women's – precisely because they were willing and able to take all the shit the state could throw at them. Twelve good persons and true of Liverpool responded to this by saying that 'they got away with it'. All I'm now saying is that they should use their hammers – surely 'our heaviest artillery' – on the traditional concept of God and intone his religion.

Peter Lumsden

Pocketing the Ball

Dear Editors,

At the end of his letter (*Freedom*, 19th September) Donald Rooum writes that *Freedom* "as a whole should convey the general attitude of anarchism".

It's hard to believe that you, as a group, believe a story about an obscenely rich man buying a football club from other obscenely rich men who own the contracts (thereby the playing and perhaps social lives) of obscenely rich players most of whom are foreigners to the city and/or the country while the first obscenely rich man manipulates to tie up the television coverage of games for his own television station is really an anarchist issue?

If you do, then, Chomsky's comments about the "role this mass hysteria about spectator sports plays" are appropriate. "It is a significant role. It plays a role first of all in making people more passive, because you're not doing it. You're watching somebody doing it ... spectator sports [are] designed to organise a community to be hysterically committed to their gladiators. That's very dangerous, and it has lots of deleterious effects. Furthermore, I think things like that are understood and are part of the planning system, part of the public relations control system ... the stupefying effect of these systems in making people passive, atomised, obedient, non-participants, non-questioning, and easily controlled and disciplined" (*Keeping the Rabble in Line*, pages 259-60).

Having almost lost religion, big league spectator sport becomes the opiate of the people. If anarchists like football, it ought to be easy enough to get a group together to have a game in the local park or on the common. To suggest that this purchase is a brand of fascist destruction of 'culture' is absurd in the extreme; a case of finding the barn door open long after the 'culture' has already been stolen by those who edged out Shakespeare and the Magna Carta, as well as acts of intelligent inquiry, with the earlier versions of the jingoistic 'mass hysteria'.

John R. Dohoney

Genetic Engineering

Dear *Freedom*,

I feel that Donald Rooum (*Freedom*, 3rd October) is being far too complacent in his judgement regarding genetic engineering. His first paragraph mentions that "a discussion of the benefits and risks of genetic engineering would be useful". So, let's do it.

I guess I am like the man in the pub he refers to (without his arrogance, I hope). We are all stupid to a degree about something or other. I would wager a safe bet that science is first on the list. Be that as it may, the same people may not all be ignorant of the other issues that his letter failed to take up: Why has there been no long-term testing of these crops that have been grown from genetically engineered seed? Why should we be used as human guinea pigs? Who will control the future seed supplies? Is the risk worth taking? Have corporate industries like Monsanto a hidden agenda?

Will the book *The Thread of Life*, mentioned by Donald, answer any of these questions? At £8.95 it is hoped that it will. Who are these "current primitivist campaigners"? Surely not the people who held a demo outside Tesco's in the Victoria shopping mall at Nottingham on 2nd October, dressed up in rather weird clothing so as to attract people's attention to the leaflets on genetic engineering being handed out. No, we were the Rainbow Coalition, anarchists, greens, Friends of the Earth and some other persuasions.

Be all that as it may, this old lad has no answers. Sitting in my greenhouse on the allotment, I ponder on such things. Is there anyone out there who can contribute? If so, I do hope that *Freedom* will give you a platform.

Mick Cropper

Dear Comrades,

If I may I would like to add a few corrections to the 'Genes and Freedom' article (*Freedom*, 19th September 1998) so that it can be understood clearly. I hope I didn't send you said article in the shape in which it was printed. If I did I'll try to blame it on my switching from one word processor to

another on a totally different computer, a situation that made proofreading next to impossible. I can't find a copy of said article on the hard disc so I'm stuck with memory – my own, a rather fallible thing. In any case sorry and ...

1) The sentence "The so-called 'science' they approach zero of psychology is really a pseudoscience" would be better put as something like the following; "The real 'science' content of what is popularly thought of as psychology approaches zero. Psychology, in its 'clinical' applications, is really a pseudoscience".

2) The sentence "We will be joined by allies that we almost certainly but they are valuable" obviously is missing the phrase "will dislike". It makes no sense otherwise.

3) The sentence "Scientific discoveries, many of the later falsified, are moving at a much more rapid pace ..." should be altered to read "many of them later falsified (falsified in the scientific sense of being proven wrong not in the sense of being frauds)".

4) Near the end of the article the phrase "of a very important manner" should read "of a very important matter" (or 'subject').

I really hope that the above errors are my fault rather than yours. I can sympathise with Comrade Fred Woodworth's dislike of computers.

I run a small business, and as the last capitalist on earth (the corporations that we all hate are almost all managerially controlled rather than run by the shareholders) I have an employee. One day there was nothing for her to do so she was playing one of her incredibly complex computer games, things that I won't touch with a ten foot pole. The thing screwed up, and fixing it was beyond her even though she has taught computer classes in the past. She was on the phone to tech support in Utah when suddenly, with no actions on her part or 'wise' suggestions from the company, the thing corrected itself.

It really makes me think about the misplaced faith so many of us have in computers and the internet.

Pat Murtagh


Sex and Politics

Dear *Freedom*,

Mack the Knife is bloodless miles away from his pseudonym in his 'Sex, politics and ordinary language' (*Freedom*, 3rd October 1998). His blunt industrial-literate mind clearly gets a kick out of playing with Clinton's definition of sex, but remember old Billy got the girl too in his fashion. In our way of thinking sexual activity and employment aren't supposed to occupy the same space-time, prostitution excepted. One is private and personal, the other public. Many people reckon this president is smart, articulate and successful. Unfortunately Clinton is not in the dock for screwing the people of Latin America or colluding with the arms industry. He's been hit for six for denying sexual exploits facilitated by his employment – a game familiar to most men and women-of-the-world. For me, the symbolism of this saga is about triumph of the persona over the personal – with Jobs-worth Starr and President Clinton, the puppets in another version of the Punch and Judy show, fighting over poor Bill's remains.

If *Freedom* has to give the fool its attention, let's not depict him as Bill-the-untethered-goat, which is the preserve of the mass media. Blow the goat. Up the wildcat ... fine emblem of anarchism. Sharpen your knife and go for the president, Mack.

Denis Pym

Please keep
sending in your letters
and donations... 

FREEDOM fortnightly
ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Printed in Great Britain by Aldgate Press,
London E1 7RQ

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